

Ref. T5/3.03(g)

CONSULTATION VERSION - APELL FOR PORT AREAS

Preparedness and Response to Chemical Accidents in Ports

Implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC Conference Resolutions

1 The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization has the honour to transmit the attached Handbook jointly prepared by IMO and the United Nations Environment Programme Industry and Environment Office (UNEP IE) relating to the preparation of emergency plans for use in port areas.

2 The United Nations Environment Programme Industry and Environment Office (UNEP IE) has developed a programme entitled the Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level (APELL), whose main goal is to prevent technological accidents and, failing this, to minimize their impacts. APELL was launched in December 1988 and is now being implemented in around thirty countries throughout the world. The "Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level" is an initiative sponsored by UNEP IE, in co-operation with the United States Chemical Manufacturers Association (CMA) and the Conseil Européen des Fédérations de l'Industrie Chimique (CEFIC). The Community Awareness and Emergency Response (CAER) Programme developed by CMA, and experience in its implementation, served as the main background for APELL. APELL also acknowledges specifically the existing responsibilities and roles of the national and international planning communities.

APELL involves two basic aspects:

- To create, and/or increase community awareness of the possible hazards involved in the manufacture, handling and use of hazardous materials, and the steps taken by authorities and industry to protect the community from them.
- To develop, on the basis of this information, and in co-operation with the local communities, emergency response plans involving the entire community, should an emergency endangering its safety arise.

Thus APELL consists of two parts:

- Provision of information to the community, which will be called "Community Awareness".
- Formulation of a plan to protect the public, which will be called "Emergency Response".

3 APELL is basically addressed to in-plant hazards and the related movements of hazardous materials in the local community. The implementation of the APELL Process may involve people and communities across local, regional or international boundaries. Territorial boundaries or jurisdictions should not restrict the participation of all interested parties in the APELL Process, but instead highlight the need for the APELL Process to develop a co-ordinated emergency response plan.

4 Many APELL users have asked for specific guidance on how to apply the principles of APELL in port areas.

5 The UNEP IE approached IMO with the idea of determining if it would be possible to apply APELL to ports. IMO agreed to co-operate with UNEP and entered into a joint project to test and develop the idea. Using funds provided by the UNEP IE, a consultant was engaged to prepare a supplement to the APELL Handbook for ports. This consultant incidently is the current chairman of the OPRC Working Group, Captain F. Pardo of Spain.

6 Last December the UNEP IE APELL Senior Level Expert Advisory Group endorsed the development of APELL for use in port areas, recognizing that the community surrounding the port may well be affected by accidents within the port area and that emergency plans within and outside the port therefore need to be coordinated and the community informed and prepared. IMO then organized a meeting of experts to review this material in detail. The IMO advisory group of experts consisted of experts from Canada, Chile, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, as well as from the following organizations:

Conseil Européen des Fédérations de l'Industrie Chimique (CEFIC)
European Harbour Masters Association (EHMA)
International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH)
International Cargo Handling Co-ordination Association (ICHCA)
IMO/UNEP - Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the
Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)
International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF)
Lloyd's Register of Shipping
Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF)
Society of International Gas Tanker and Terminal Operators Ltd. (SIGTTO).

The review recommended that a single document which amalgamated the original APELL Handbook with the consultant's supplementary material be prepared.

7 "APELL for Port Areas" has been developed jointly by IMO and UNEP to meet this need. Both organizations are well aware that, in many countries as well as internationally, provisions are made for emergency planning for both natural and technological disasters. This Handbook is not intended to interfere with any of these provisions or guidance documents but rather to increase knowledge of such provisions and guidance and to provide a methodology to help those responsible to comply with them. Even if it is believed that all industrial accidents, in port areas and elsewhere, are in principle preventable, realism dictates that response plans should be prepared against the occurrence of such accidents. This Handbook accordingly sets out a procedure to enable decision-makers and technical personnel to improve community awareness of activities involving hazardous substances in port areas and to improve or create co-ordinated emergency response plans.

8 This work has taken place in the context of other joint work with other international organizations on various aspects of major accident prevention and preparedness in ports. IMO, UNEP and the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) cosponsored a Workshop on "Chemical Safety in Port Areas", which was organized by OECD from 18-21 October 1993 in Finland. The Workshop highlighted the difficulties of emergency planning and management due to the great variety of activities and interfaces in port areas. IMO and OECD are now collaborating in the preparation of a document entitled "Guidance Concerning Chemical Safety in Port Areas". Meanwhile UNEP and REMPEC has collaborated on a Workshop on Preparedness for and response to Maritime Related Accidents Involving Hazardous Substances in Mediterranean Areas and their Approaches, held from 22-26 March 1994 in Barcelona, Spain.

9 "APELL for Port Areas" is presented as a working draft. The intention is to distribute it widely, in response to the perceived and expressed need, for piloting and feedback prior to its eventual formal publication. In particular, REMPEC and UNEP IE have agreed to collaborate on one or more pilot projects in the Mediterranean Region during 1996-97.

10 Bearing in mind the focus of the APELL process and the status of on-going port related IMO work, it is recommended that the Consultation Version of the Handbook be widely circulated and recommended for use with the intention of obtaining "feedback" based on experience gained in its use in the field. Users will be requested to communicate their views on the utility of the Handbook and suggestions for improvement to the IMO Secretariat. It has been suggested that the OPRC Working Group consider the Handbook at MEPC 40 based on the replies received and make suggestions for revision as appropriate. The Secretariat will cooperate with the UNEP IE in the preparation of an evaluation of the Handbook's effectiveness and any draft proposed revision.

11 The Secretary-General would be grateful if steps could be taken to bring this information to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

Attachment.
